



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
Education First **التعليم أولاً**



Inspection Report

Al Maali International Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Maali International Private School

Inspection Date	3 – 7 November 2013
School ID#	44
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education and American (Textbook)
Number of Students	1625
Age Range	3 to 19 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Khadijah Al Sayyer
School Address	East12, Street 66, Section 21, Mussafah, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 559 1000
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 666 4886
Official Email (ADEC)	Almaali.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	almaali.sch.ae
Date of last inspection	21 – 24 May 2012

The overall effectiveness of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A High performing (overall effectiveness grade 1, 2 or 3)

Band B Satisfactory (overall effectiveness grade 4 or 5)

Band C In need of significant improvement (overall effectiveness grade 6, 7 or 8)

The School was judged to be:	BAND C;	GRADE 7
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The main strengths of the school are:

- students have a reasonable understanding of UAE values, culture and society
- students' views are positive about how well they get along with others and relationships in the school community are secure
- parents' views of the school are mainly positive
- students feel that bullying has been addressed and any incidents are resolved effectively.

The main areas for improvement are:

- differentiation and assessment for learning are not a feature in the planning of lessons
 - lack of resources to support the curriculum, especially in Kindergarten (KG) and lower grades
 - insufficient breadth and balance to the curriculum overall, especially in the delivery of social studies in the American section
 - ineffective monitoring of the impact of professional development.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors. During the inspection, 100 lessons were observed, including specialist subjects, and assemblies and break times. Arrangements for arrival and departure were evaluated. Students were observed, assessment and test results were analysed, and school documentation reviewed. Inspectors had discussions with students, staff, and parents. In addition, 144 responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school were analysed.

Description of the School

The school was originally established as a villa school in 1996, moving to its current premises in 2009, and by 2010 all students were based on the new campus in Mussafah. It caters for a range of backgrounds; approximately 21% of students are Emirati, 18% Egyptian, 11% from Jordan and 11% from the Sudan. The remainder of the students come from a variety of backgrounds of mainly Arabic heritage. There are 1,625 students in the school, 352 children in KG, 747 students in primary, 256 and 270 in the middle and upper school respectively. Fifty-eight percent of students are boys, 42% are girls. Over 98% of students are Muslim. Boys and girls are taught in mixed classes up to Grade 3 and single-sex classes from Grades 4 to 12. 21 students are identified as gifted and talented. 25 students are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), mostly with severe to moderate learning difficulties. Admission to the school is through an examination process.

The school follows the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum and also an American textbook-based approach. The school occupies purpose-built premises on an enclosed campus; students are taught in different blocks depending on the curriculum they follow and their age range and gender. The school's vision is to create a place of excellence, to provide a healthy and stimulating environment to prepare students for the future.

School fees range from AED 6,600 to AED 17,400, excluding books, uniform and transportation. These figures fall between the affordable and medium fees bands. There are 130 teachers and 39 additional staff. The school is managed by a board of directors.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Student performance does not compare well with other schools following the same curriculum. Attainment in all subjects is below age-related expectations and best international standards. It is well below in English, Arabic, mathematics, and science. Students make very unsatisfactory progress in these subjects. Although progress in Islamic studies and social studies shows more signs of improvement, it remains unsatisfactory. Students' skills in literacy, numeracy and thinking creatively are not sufficient. Children come into KG with skills which are broadly at the expected level for their age. They do not make enough progress in developing the skills they will need for the next stage of their learning. Their hand control skills are reasonably secure and they can draw and use pencils and crayons appropriately. In English, they are unable to use the sounds letters make well enough in order to read words. Children can count, but there are too few activities for them to develop skills in solving simple problems. Their skills in physical development are at the expected level.

In Arabic students' skills are very unsatisfactory and their progress is similar, except in KG as children demonstrate knowledge about the alphabet, words and sentences. Students in older grades are able to discuss and explain what they have understood. Students' fluency and ability to read with expression are weak, because their use of punctuation and accent is limited. Writing is also below age-related expectations in the upper grades as very few students follow the writing conventions of spelling and grammar. Students are not able to read poetry with correct intonation.

In Islamic studies, children in KG are able to read short sections from the Holy Qur'an. By Grade 5, girls can read and recite chapters using recitation rules correctly. Grade 12 girls can explain the values of what they have learned, analysing evidence to reach conclusions. Most boys in upper grades are not able to use their knowledge as they rely too much on textbook information. They do not read and recite with expected accuracy. They demonstrate little ability to consider religious issues and link these to their daily lives.

In social studies, Grade 10 students make satisfactory progress and they are able to make comparisons and identify the significant accomplishments of Islamic civilisations. In Grades 4 and 5, attainment and progress are unsatisfactory as students are not able to answer questions, due to a lack of understanding and too much reliance on memorising text. Overall students have limited skills or opportunities to engage in discussion to develop their ideas and conclusions.

In English, mathematics and science, progress is very unsatisfactory. Students' skills in English in Grade 12 are lacking, particularly for boys as they do not have enough confidence to contribute other than with very simple sentences. This means skills are well below expectations, and their progress is not always supported by adults modeling fluency in English. Girls in Grade 12 have more secure skills in speaking and listening. In mathematics, Grade 12 boys in the Arabic section make satisfactory progress in their learning. In Grade 6 for both boys and girls, skills in using fractions are not secure. This is because mathematical understanding is not developing. In science, skills are not developing as they should as students are guided to the correct answer rather than investigating and finding out for themselves. This means students cannot think critically to reach conclusions independently and their skills in developing a hypothesis are very limited. Occasionally, some students use their skills to review their learning and clarify their thinking.

Students' personal development

Many students state that they like school as they feel they get along with their friends, including those from different backgrounds. This is reflected in respect for the different cultures represented in the UAE. Relationships are generally secure. Attendance, currently 85%, and punctuality are unsatisfactory. In lessons, attitudes are sometimes positive, mainly in younger classes and the girls' section and where teaching is effective. For example, Grade 12 boys were engaged and motivated in a mathematics lesson because they were interested and knew their questions would be answered when they did not understand. Behaviour and attitudes deteriorate in lessons if classroom management is not effective. In too many lessons students comply rather than engage in learning and tend to be passive. Students do not have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives. They do not have enough experiences to work together as a group, to use their initiative or to have autonomy for their learning. Students make a contribution to the running of the school and take some responsibility when they act as members of the school council and assume other duties. They are less responsible in caring for the learning environment.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very unsatisfactory. Teachers mainly have secure subject knowledge. This is not always the case especially in the younger age groups. Teachers do not always use spoken English or spell words in English correctly. Teaching relies too much on students being told what to do rather than engaging in the learning process. Knowledge tends to be reinforced by frequent repetition, to the disadvantage of skills acquisition and understanding of concepts

and ideas. Lessons do not offer a range of different activities to meet students' needs, abilities and interests. Students are usually not able to think critically and creatively, to research or work out solutions for themselves, because not enough lessons enable this. Sometimes questions are used to check for understanding. Too often, students answer a question as a large group and there is no attempt to assess individual learning. This means that the process does not inform future teaching and is not effective. Support staff in KG are not always effective in interacting with children to develop their skills. Teaching is heavily dominated by the use of outdated textbooks and worksheets and very little else to engage the learners. Students rarely use technology to support learning.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum implementation is very unsatisfactory, because it does not provide sufficient opportunities to develop students' 21st century skills. The Arabic curriculum is too narrow with no integration of subjects and limited impact in motivating students. There is not enough within the curriculum to enable students to investigate and research as the focus is too much on imparting information to students. Social studies lessons in Grades 4 to 9 for non-Arabic students, were not offered in English during the inspection. Progress in developing the American curriculum is very limited. The description of the curriculum as American is compromised by the continued use of outdated textbooks. The lack of a modern curriculum, which is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, means students' skills for the future are not being developed. Within both curricula there is a lack of breadth, balance and relevance to meet the learning needs of this diverse student group. Students who need extra help and those who learn quickly are not catered for. Physical education and art are offered, but there is no provision for music in the American curriculum. There is not a strong creative element or enough investigation to promote independence and critical thinking. There are some community links and additional activities such as trips.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has systems and records in place to ensure students are looked after and these have had a reasonable impact on students' personal development. There is a wide range of policies and procedures, but these are not all widely known to all staff, including the child protection policy. Fire regulations and evacuation procedures are generally secure as are first aid facilities, but medical waste is not disposed of properly. The school communicates with parents about absence and lateness. This is not having sufficient impact to improve attendance. There are no effective and meaningful systems to track students' progress, which

means there is not a regular and clear analysis of progress. As a result, teaching is not sufficiently adapted to meet students' needs, and the curriculum is not appropriately adapted to meet the wide range of abilities, such as special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. Parents indicate that they feel informed and that students receive information about the choices available to them, towards the next steps in their education

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school is of an adequate size with both indoor and outdoor facilities, including a gymnasium and swimming pool. There are rooms for art, ICT, science, two libraries and canteen facilities. These are insufficient to support the curriculum. Ramps are too steep and significantly fail to provide easy access to buildings. Shaded areas are provided outdoors and children in KG have their own designated outdoor space. Classrooms with higher numbers of students are cramped. The maintenance is very unsatisfactory as many areas need attention and present potential hazards for students, such as chipped steps. The premises are not fully safe or fit for purpose in all areas. Efforts to keep it clean are insufficient, for example the lunch area is not clean and the pool is not maintained to reasonable standards. There is a designated member of staff for health and safety, who is not able to deal speedily with identified issues. Electrical and other equipment is checked regularly and documentation is maintained. Hazardous materials are not stored in accordance with the school procedures as cupboards are either unlocked or rooms unattended. Security of the site is reasonable and gates both externally and internally are supervised.

The school's resources to support its aims

There are sufficient numbers of staff, all of whom are qualified but not all are competent practitioners. Other resources are extremely variable in quality and quantity though the school. Most classrooms are barren spaces, without even the basic resources to support learning. Many do not have any technology with the exception of KG. There are no additional resources to support specific learning needs and of those provided, many are carried around by staff as they move from room to room, and some are provided by staff. There is a librarian, but the libraries are only open for half a day each week and there are few books available. There are designated sciences laboratories, which have a wide variety of resources, but not enough basic equipment, such as goggles, gloves and telescopes. The swimming pool was being maintained during the inspection. In the gymnasium there is fitness equipment, which is not suitable for whole class teaching or for younger age groups. Transportation arrangements are very inadequate; not all buses have the required equipment, and organisation is not

clearly defined in terms of responsibilities. The storage of food is adequate; food is brought in daily, but choices are not always healthy.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are very unsatisfactory. The board of directors and senior leadership team (SLT) are not a proactive force to bring about improvement. Self-evaluation is overly positive and is not substantiated by evidence. The SLT's views of the school's effectiveness are not objective or realistic. The school improvement plan is appropriately linked to identified needs. However, the timescales do not reflect a realistic and balanced view of what can be achieved. For example, only three months is allocated to improving the quality of teaching while a year is given to training staff in child protection. Staff roles and responsibilities are not well-defined and not delegated adequately to develop a culture of continuous school improvement. Leadership is not sufficiently evaluative about the impact of professional development and therefore is unable to give clear strategic direction. UAE values are promoted to an appropriate level. There is significant lack of attention by SLT to ensure the health and safety of students, appropriate maintenance of the school and adequate resources to match the needs of the curriculum. Links and communication with parents have improved and the Vice Principal provides a visible presence in the school on a daily basis. Responses to the parent questionnaire show that parents have a generally positive view of the school. Most parents were not in agreement that the school helps students to make progress for the future or that discipline is managed effectively. There were also some negative comments about class sizes and the support for specific needs.

Progress since the last inspection

The previous inspection took place in May 2012, when the school was judged to be poor. There were substantial recommendations, including statutory health and safety issues.

The school responded to the last inspection report by addressing the following:

- a new Vice Principal has been appointed
- there are policies for child protection and anti-bullying and a single central register of all staff
- Arabic is now provided for all students who do not speak Arabic as their first language
- the clinic is licensed
- facilities both indoors and outside have been upgraded, including some equipment for technology and physical education

- professional development is now provided on a regular basis
- there is a complaints committee, a school council and students have been given responsibilities as monitors and behaviour supervisors.

The Vice Principal has been responsible for creating systems and improving documentation to support students' personal development and well-being. The child protection policy is still not understood clearly by all staff, particularly those new to the school. The nurse does not have a license. Resources remain very limited in quantity, quality and range. Professional development has not been effective in improving teaching to meet the needs of all students. Assessment is still based on test and examinations and there is not an effective way of tracking progress or assessing learning in lessons. Lessons are observed and feedback given, by senior staff. There is not enough objectivity or accuracy in this process or guidance for staff to understand what they need to do to improve. Students stated bullying had been addressed and any incidents were dealt with properly.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. As a priority, address all health and safety concerns.
2. As a matter of urgency, improve learning to raise attainment and progress in all subjects, particularly in those which are well below expectations by:
 - i. planning clearly identified activities which are matched to the different needs of students
 - ii. lesson plans include assessment opportunities which are based on observations and questioning of individual students' learning to inform plans for the next lesson.
3. Ensure the senior leadership team:
 - i. monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively and provide teachers with constructive feedback to help improve practice
 - ii. monitor the impact of the professional development and link it to individual teacher performance management.
4. Update and improve the curriculum planning, to motivate students, and develop programmes of study with clear learning outcomes based on high expectations about what students can achieve.
5. Improve the provision of resources in all subjects.

Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
Performance Standard	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory & Improving	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Poor
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Standard 1: Students' attainment and progress								
Standard 2: Students' personal development								
Standard 3: The quality of teaching and learning								
Standard 4: The meeting of students' needs through the curriculum								
Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students								
Standard 6: The quality of the school's accommodation and premises								
Standard 7: The school's resources to support its aims								
Standard 8: The effectiveness of leadership and management								
Summary Evaluation: The school's overall effectiveness								